

Explaining Japan's Lack of Green Parties :

A Social–Milieu Approach

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Abstract

Although Japan is a highly industrialized country, it still lacks any significant green parties. This apparent Japanese exceptionalism in terms of green parties cannot be clarified by such conventional explanations as its electoral institutions, party competition, and degree of post–materialism. This paper will instead utilize the German–developed framework of social–milieu studies to explain this phenomenon. It focuses on green parties' potential support bases, paying attention to the characteristics of green milieu parties. German milieu studies have found that alternative or techno milieus with high educational and occupational qualifications and left–libertarian value orientations have supported the German Green Party. Our data show that an ironist milieu can be regarded as a potential basis of support for Japanese green parties, as Japanese ironist are more leftist toward political and economic issues and more liberal in their cultural attitudes. However, German alternatives tend to be active, while Japanese ironists tend to be passive and disinclined

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to participate in various groups or to associate with others. Such passivity inclines them to retreat into their private lives without expressing their left-libertarian value orientation in the political arena. Our findings therefore suggest that a milieu exists that could potentially support Japanese green parties, but that these parties have been failing to gain support from it because of its members' passivity and apolitical behavior.

1. Introduction: Beyond Eurocentrism in the Study of Green Parties

Japan has had no significant green party since the 1980s.¹ Conversely, the German Green Party (*Die Grünen*) established its status as a left-libertarian party when it first won parliamentary seats in the 1983 West German federal election. Though scholarly attention has shifted since the 1990s to radical-right parties, scholars have continued to study such aspects of the *Grünen* as their unique organizational characteristics and their impact on party systems and policy outputs, reflecting the maturity of the party's experiences (Frankland 1995; Frankland & Schoonmaker 1992; Müller-Rommel & Poguntke 2002; Offe 1998; Poguntke 1993).

A wave of green parties also reached North America and Eastern Europe in the 1990s, and green parties are now active in such East Asian countries and regions as South Korea and Taiwan, as well as in many developing countries on all continents. This means that green parties can be established in all industrialized countries and at least some developing countries regardless of those countries' differences in politics and political cultures.

Studies of green parties need to go beyond the European context. Müller-Rommel (1989) and O'Neil (1997) have conducted pan-European comparative studies, but it is time to expand the scope of study. Research about green parties should provide us basic data for analyzing the effects of social change on politics and vice versa in *all* industrialized countries

(Tranter & Western 2009). Studying green parties in East Asia is also likely to clarify whether industrial development and environmental threats can inevitably generate green parties.

Keeping these comparative contexts in mind, we will focus on Japan as a negative case in regard to the rise of green parties. We intend for our analysis to help increase understanding of some salient characteristics of Japanese politics from a different perspective than the conventional understanding of Japan as a society of consensus.

2. A Brief History of Left-Libertarian Parties in Japan

Green, or left-libertarian (Kitschelt 1989), parties in Japan have been running in elections for the Diet's Upper House since the proportional representation system was introduced for it in 1983. These parties' establishment peaked in the Upper House election of 1989 due to the Chernobyl shock, but in vain. Table 1 shows that all left-libertarian parties' challenges have failed, receiving only negligible voting support except for the Green Congress, which won 1.62% of the total vote in 2004, the highest of any of them. In reality, these so-called parties had been hastily constituted to stand for elections without establishing party organizations engaged in daily activities.

The Green Congress, however, had a nationwide organization, and may therefore be considered Japan's first full-fledged green party. Atsuo Nakamura, an actor and a member of the Upper House belonging to the centrist Shinto Sakigake, established it after a schism within Sakigake in 2002. The Congress dissolved soon after losing in the Upper House election in 2004, but some of its ex-members are trying to launch a new green party now.

Despite their organizational weaknesses, failures in national elections, and short lives, green-oriented parties have continued to make attempts to achieve parliamentary representation. We therefore need to question why these efforts

have failed and why no green parties have taken root in Japan. This paper will propose a tentative analysis of this problem, focusing on specific social milieus that constitute potential support bases for left-libertarian parties, in line with German findings that die Grünen is a milieu party which depends on the support from alternative, or young and highly educated, milieus (Mochmann & El-Menouar 2005 ; Takahashi 1998 ; Veen 1989).

Table 1 Left-libertarian parties and their electoral performances in Japan

Year of the Upper House election	No. of votes gained by each party					% of votes for LL parties
1983	Multitude party (36703)	Japan restoration party (34715)				0.15
1986	(42804)	(68972)	Environment al party (31464)	Japan green party (138656)	Japan green coalition (60488)	0.59
1989	(42805)	(43048)	(29929)	Global club (334805)	Green party (121248)	1.54
1992	(17639)	(46713)	(85947)	Hope (144599)	Anti-nuclear people (161523)	0.65
1995	(36528)	(49680)		Green and agriculture solidarity (48516)	Life and green network (143138)	0.68
1998 2001						
2004					Green congress (903775)	1.62

Source : Asahi Shimbun

3. Inadequate Hypotheses for the Lack of Green Parties in Japan

This section examines three potential explanations for the lack of green parties in Japan. These are: a) the influence of Japan's electoral system, b) party competition in the changing political space, and (c) the relative strength of post-materialism.

The Influence of Japan's Electoral System

Electoral systems constitute one of the key factors that influence the fate of all political parties. The threshold for winning a parliamentary seat especially affects small parties' ability to enter parliaments. Die Grünen could not surpass the German system's 5% threshold to be elected until the federal election of 1983. When proportional representation replaced the national constituency system for electing the Upper House of Japan's Diet, those who had stood for the national constituency as individuals had to launch left-libertarian and other small parties. These candidates and parties of course preferred the proportional representation of the Upper House to the daunting medium-sized constituency system of the Lower House.

In general, green parties are more successful in countries with proportional representation systems. The strength of green parties in the European Parliament is partly due to its proportional representation system. The absence of green MPs in the UK and USA is primarily due to their plurality first-past-the-post voting systems.

However, electoral-system characteristics cannot explain green parties' life spans and strengths. Although high thresholds for winning seats in parliaments may discourage small parties from standing in elections and plurality first-past-the-post voting systems make their chances of electoral success extremely unlikely, green parties have still been active in the UK and USA. Japan has adopted a combination of multi-seat electorates and proportional-representation for its Upper House elections, while its Lower House elections are conducted with a single-seat and proportional-representation system.

In addition, elections for Japan's prefectural assemblies use a medium-sized constituency system and those for its municipal assemblies use a large-constituency system. Japanese electoral systems are therefore much more favorable for green parties than those in the UK and USA, making it difficult to explain the failure of Japanese green parties on that basis.

Party Competition in the Changing Political Space

Kitschelt (1989, 1994, 1995) convincingly explained the emergence of left-libertarian and radical right parties in Western Europe from the perspective of party competition in the political space. He held that the fundamental political ideological axis was between capitalism and socialism, which resulted in competition between social democrats, moderate conservatives, and smaller parties.

However, the emergence of such new issues as the environment, gender, and the rights of minority groups added a new axis in the political space. Figure 1 illustrates how the rise of an authoritarian-libertarian axis resulted in the rotation of space for party competition. A left-libertarian versus right-authoritarian axis replaced the socialist-capitalist one, resulting in the established social democratic and conservative parties tending to converge with each other. The convergence of established parties has generated new political opportunities for challengers to enter into party competition, and green parties found a niche at the upper-left side and radical right parties at the lower-right side. The merit of Kitschelt's (1994, 1995) schema is that it explains the timing of the emergence of green parties from the perspective of party competition.

This raises the question of how this argument can be applied to the Japanese case. The Socialist Party of Japan had been the biggest opposition party under the 1955 regime. It was highly dependent on labor unions, but it also gained support from the environmental movement because of the strength of its leftist factions. It had even opposed nuclear power plants, unlike the West German Social Democratic Party (SPD). In this way it had responded to the interests of left-libertarian voters to some extent, although it had been declining from its peak period of the 1960s. After the collapse of the 1955 regime in 1993 the Socialist Party broke up, with most of its members joining the newly established centrist Democratic Party, making it the

largest opposition party. However, its leftist faction remained as the Socialist Party, changing its name to the Social Democratic Party (SDP) of Japan in 1996. This generated a wide vacuum at the left-libertarian end of the political space.

This created favorable conditions for new left-libertarian parties to emerge. However, almost all of the new parties established after 1993 targeted right-libertarians, a group which Kitschelt ignored.² With an increasing number of swing voters, new parties found niches in both the economically and socio-culturally liberal segments (Kabashima 2004 ; Miyake 1995, 1998).

The SDP has been trying unsuccessfully to shift its support base from labor unions to left-libertarian independent voters. Party competition in political space therefore fails to explain the lack of green parties in Japan.

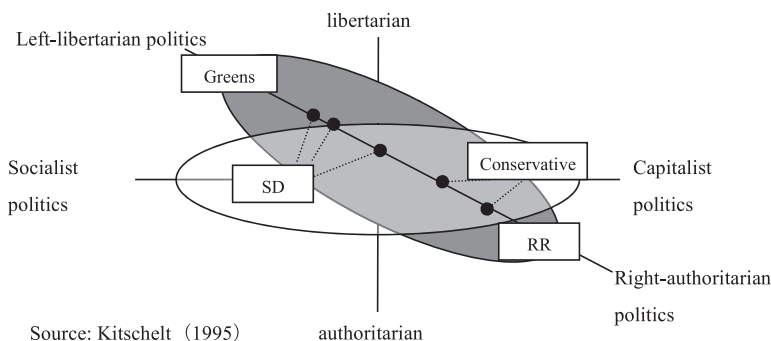


Figure 1 The rise of green and radical right parties in the changing political space

Political Culture : The Strength of Post-Materialism

As both Japan's electoral system and nature of party competition fail to explain its lack of green parties, it seems reasonable to focus on the demand side. Among many approaches to the study of political consciousness, those involving the theory of post-materialism seem the most plausible ones for explaining the relationship between Japanese voters' demands and the country's

lack of successful green parties. Though Inglehart (1977, 1990) found that post-materialists tend to prefer leftist parties, it is more accurate to say that post-materialism is the source of green parties' support.

This raises the question of how post-materialism theory can explain Japan's lack of green parties. Rootes (1995) found no clear relationship between the strength of green parties and environmental consciousness at the national level. However, it can also be argued that a certain threshold of post-materialists is a necessary condition for the establishment of a stable green party. Table 2 shows the results of the World Values Survey (1990–1991) to illustrate Japan's position in a cross-national perspective. The percentages under 0 indicate consistently non-post-materialist responses to the survey's

Table 2 Postmaterialist values in international comparison

	Postmaterialist score						average	high – low score
	0	1	2	3	4	5		
Finland	1.4	10.1	29.7	34.9	18.2	5.6	2.8	57.3
Netherland	3.2	19.5	24.9	26.4	17.8	8.2	2.6	49.2
France	6.3	20.1	29.0	26.4	12.4	5.8	2.4	38.3
Belgium	6.1	23.0	29.5	24.5	11.6	5.2	2.3	35.2
Italy	8.1	20.3	29.2	21.5	14.0	6.9	2.3	34.3
West Germany	6.7	24.1	28.6	21.1	12.4	7.0	2.3	33.8
Sweden	6.4	23.1	31.3	23.0	10.5	5.7	2.3	32.8
Spain	9.2	21.4	27.9	23.0	12.7	5.8	2.3	32.3
Canada	5.3	23.4	34.4	21.2	11.2	4.5	2.2	31.6
Denmark	7.3	24.0	31.1	21.0	10.6	6.1	2.2	30.4
Japan	4.7	23.5	39.1	24.0	7.6	1.1	2.1	28.0
UK	8.9	25.6	29.2	21.9	10.0	4.4	2.1	27.4
Austria	6.8	26.3	33.0	19.6	10.7	3.6	2.1	27.1
USA	9.5	30.5	30.1	17.6	9.3	3.0	2.0	20.4
Ireland	10.8	27.5	31.0	19.2	8.9	2.7	2.0	20.0
Norway	12.4	26.4	33.5	17.8	7.7	2.2	1.9	15.3
Portugal	12.0	26.3	37.8	17.3	5.1	1.5	1.8	11.9

Source : Abramson and Inglehart(1995), Inglehart(1995)

items, scaling to 5, which indicates consistently post-materialist responses.

The data show that the Japanese are relatively non-post-materialist, but tend to be so more than people in such countries as Austria, the UK, and the USA, all of which have active green parties. However, it is worth noting that at 1.1% Japan's proportion of survey respondents consistently choosing post-materialist responses was the lowest of the countries listed (Abramson & Inglehart 1995 ; Inglehart 1997). This may be a reason for the lack of green parties in Japan, but is not the whole story, as the country's small proportion of potentially staunch green-party supporters still needs explanation.

Social milieu theory seems likely to supply this explanation.

4. Social Milieus and Party Support : German Studies' Findings

The term *social milieu* has been used in historical analyses of German society. Since the 1980s, market analysts and sociologists have been using the term to define lifestyles and to analyze social inequality. In this context, social milieus are "groups encompassing people with the same opinions" (Hradil 2002 : 222).³ It was a rarely used concept until Schulze's *Experience Society* in 1992 (Geißler 2006 : 109), which critically examined Bourdieu's thesis of class and culture, emphasizing the significance of school education and age over class and status on aesthetic sensibilities in everyday life (Schulze 2005). The declining significance of class and status as explanatory variables for attitudes and behaviors since the 1980s led to the increase in social milieu studies, the conditions of human lives having become too diversified to maintain stable life-courses according to class and status (Beck 1983, 1986).

The coming of affluent societies has brought about a relative independence of consciousness from objective living conditions, so that people's consciousness often deviates from their class and status, and social-structural conditions now determine our lifeworlds (*Lebenswelten*), or worlds that people

experience together, increasingly less often, resulting in a consequent decline in class mentality (Huinink 2005 : 118–20). It is from this context that such more “culturalist” approaches as lifestyle and milieu studies have emerged (Junge 2002 : 56).

A German market–research company called the SINUS Institute was the first to pay attention to social milieus in order to develop better and more sophisticated electoral marketing (Gluchowski 1987 : 20). In 1984, the German SPD employed the institute to conduct a survey researching its constituencies.

It has applied its milieu–based market analysis to research into political support and the structure of lifeworlds (Flaig, Meyer, & Ueltzhöffer 1997 : 20). Vester et al. (2001) clarified the relationship between social milieus and political behaviors from a political sociology perspective, applying the Bourdieuan concept of social space (*champ*) to find where various milieus and political parties overlap.

The SPD relies on both old and new support bases, resulting in SPD supporters being more heterogeneous than those of the conservative Christian Democratic Union–Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) coalition in terms of their lifestyles, attitudes, and value orientations. The two dominant types of milieus from which the SPD draws support differ substantially in regard to their lifestyles, attitudes, and aesthetic tendencies. The traditional and nontraditional worker milieus, its old support bases, were highly oriented to classic welfare–state policies, but the hedonist and alternative milieus, its new support bases, were characterized by ecological concerns and post–materialism. In contrast, likely CDU/CSU voters come from two milieus with relatively similar lifestyles, the upper conservative and petty bourgeois milieus (Flaig, Mayer, & Ueltzhöffer 1997 : 139–41 ; Hofmann 1984).

Those in the traditional and nontraditional worker milieus are aesthetically conservative, similar to the petty bourgeois milieu, but those in the hedonist and alternative milieus are closer to supporters of die Grünen. These two

groups support the SPD, but they have little in common with each other in terms of everyday thinking and perceptions of politics. Moreover, those in the alternative milieu tend to support die Grünen strongly and those in the nontraditional worker milieu tend to support the radical right parties strongly (Flaig, Mayer, & Ueltzhöffer 1997 : 139–41 ; Hofmann 1984).

It seems reasonable that finding the correspondence between social milieus and support bases of the new politics on the left and the right should help us to clarify the potential support base for Japan's green parties.

5. Data and Method

Methods of Classifying Social Milieus

We conducted a survey in eight wards and cities in Tokyo in 2005 to find evidence of the above-mentioned correspondence. We selected a sample of 8,500 potential respondents from the voter registration list using a multi-stage sampling, and distributed questionnaires by mail, asking the sample to return them by mail also, and 2,887, or 33.96% of them did. The respondents were males and females aged 20 to 79 years, but we focused our analysis on only those between 20 and 69.

We classified the respondents' social milieus and described their characteristics mainly according to Mochmann (2002) and Mochmann and El-Menouar (2005), who detailed the methodology for classifying and identifying milieus based on various lifestyle indicators using data from the biennial German General Social Survey (ALLBUS). The method of analysis involves a) performing factor analysis on a series of questions related to lifestyles to prepare the variables to be used in milieu extraction, b) performing cluster analysis of these variables to identify the social milieus, and c) giving each social milieu a name referring to its social attributes, lifestyle characteristics, organizational membership, and value orientations.⁴

The variables we used for factor analysis were 16 items related to leisure activities, 10 involving TV, and seven involving diet. We prepared this study's questionnaire mainly by selecting items from ALLBUS,⁵ although we established the items concerning diet based on Bourdieu's analysis of diet and social groups (Bourdieu 1979), as we considered this to be an essential component for grasping contemporary Japanese lifestyles. Table 3 shows the results of a factor analysis of the lifestyle items, which extracted nine factors. We used the factor scores as variables in a later analysis.

We also used these nine variables for a cluster analysis to extract lifestyle milieus, utilizing a non-hierarchical k-means cluster analysis method, in which researchers specify the number of clusters in advance. We then performed the classification by a method designed to minimize the sum of the square distance between the sample and the cluster in which the sample is classified, according to the number of clusters.

The biggest problem with the k-means is that the number of clusters is by definition arbitrary. Furthermore, the characteristics of each cluster may vary with the number of clusters, requiring caution. Since this analysis was highly exploratory in nature, we followed SINUS's procedure of extracting nine milieus and using nine clusters as the starting line, with three above or below nine, which meant checking six to 12 clusters. We found that nine clusters constructed the most understandable classification, so we specified those as social milieus. We subsequently checked the social attributes, lifestyles, organizational memberships, and value orientations of each milieu and gave them names.⁶

We next considered the correlation between social attributes and each milieu by utilizing cross tabulation analysis. Our analysis's social attributes were gender, generation, educational background, occupation, and others. We regarded an attribute to be a characteristic of a milieu when its adjusted residual was two or more. We also used the variable of organizational mem-

bership when considering the characteristics of each milieu.

Table 3 Factor Analysis of Lifestyles

	Indoor Entertain- ment	TV: Entertain- ment	Acquainta- nces	TV: Culture	Eat: High	Eat: Mass	Cultural Entertain- ment	Mass Entertain- ment	Youth Subculture
[Q16]PC	0.65	-0.10	-0.04	0.05	-0.01	0.11	-0.09	-0.07	0.03
[Q16]Personal Study	0.47	-0.13	-0.03	0.14	0.02	0.02	0.11	-0.07	0.04
[Q16]CD / DVD	0.42	0.09	0.02	0.00	-0.06	0.04	0.16	-0.02	0.20
[Q16]Book	0.37	-0.21	0.07	0.17	0.03	-0.15	0.06	-0.05	0.23
[Q16]Yoga / Exercise	0.35	0.11	0.03	-0.05	0.05	-0.12	0.13	0.00	-0.10
[Q18]Vriety	0.15	0.73	-0.09	-0.06	-0.03	-0.01	-0.07	0.00	0.13
[Q18]Quiz	-0.13	0.62	0.03	0.08	0.04	-0.10	-0.01	0.07	0.14
[Q18]Tabloid show	-0.11	0.51	0.02	0.15	0.01	0.04	0.04	-0.08	-0.03
[Q18]Drama	-0.01	0.49	0.04	0.11	0.00	0.04	0.04	-0.12	-0.03
[Q16]Neighbors	-0.14	-0.08	0.82	0.02	0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.00	0.10
[Q16]Friends	0.11	0.02	0.75	-0.08	-0.03	0.05	0.08	-0.01	0.05
[Q16]Relatives	0.05	0.09	0.43	0.00	0.09	0.06	-0.03	-0.09	-0.08
[Q18]Documentary	0.06	0.09	-0.03	0.70	0.01	0.08	0.04	-0.03	0.00
[Q18]News	0.11	0.12	-0.01	0.59	0.00	0.03	-0.09	0.01	-0.12
[Q18]Art / Culture	-0.09	-0.02	-0.05	0.52	0.01	0.02	0.50	-0.02	0.05
[Q19]French Restaurant	0.10	0.03	0.03	-0.01	0.86	0.01	-0.11	-0.10	0.03
[Q19]Japanese Restaurant	-0.17	-0.02	0.06	0.04	0.60	-0.05	0.05	0.18	-0.03
[Q19]Ethnic Restaurant	0.23	0.01	-0.08	-0.04	0.46	0.07	0.08	0.02	0.00
[Q19]Fast-Food	0.03	-0.02	0.03	0.09	-0.04	0.80	-0.04	0.02	0.04
[Q19]Family Restaurant	-0.05	0.03	0.12	0.03	0.05	0.61	-0.01	0.05	-0.07
[Q19]Convenience Store	0.04	-0.05	-0.09	0.01	-0.03	0.31	-0.05	0.16	0.17
[Q16]Concert / Exhibition	0.13	-0.02	-0.02	0.02	0.06	-0.10	0.67	0.00	-0.06
[Q16]Artistic Activity	0.12	-0.02	0.07	-0.06	-0.08	0.02	0.54	0.04	-0.07
[Q16]Movies / Live Concert	0.27	0.13	0.02	-0.09	-0.01	0.01	0.44	0.14	0.01
[Q19]Pub	0.08	-0.10	-0.10	-0.05	0.10	0.17	0.05	0.49	0.02
[Q16]Karaoke	-0.13	0.05	-0.02	-0.12	-0.01	0.13	0.24	0.47	0.03
[Q18]Sports	0.01	0.09	0.06	0.37	-0.04	-0.09	-0.19	0.42	-0.05
[Q16]Gamble	-0.20	-0.10	-0.06	0.03	0.02	-0.02	-0.09	0.42	0.17
[Q16]Sports	0.32	-0.04	0.13	0.04	-0.03	-0.07	-0.02	0.38	-0.19
[Q16]Comic	0.14	0.03	0.03	-0.08	0.01	-0.05	-0.09	0.12	0.71
[Q18]Anime	-0.02	0.17	0.08	-0.03	0.00	0.10	-0.04	-0.06	0.37
Loading Square	2.39	1.94	1.83	1.76	2.19	1.88	2.43	1.39	1.42

Factor analysis (promax rotation)

Finally, we confirmed any relationships to such value orientations as authoritarianism, economic liberalism, nationalism, and hedonism.⁷ We then also calculated the means of each milieu for the value variables. However, since we did not enter this into the cluster analysis we relaxed the standard so that when the value was either 0.2 or more or -0.2 or less we regarded it as a characteristic. This was our method for clarifying the characteristics of each milieu to determine the appropriate name.

Table 4 Names and Characteristics of Milieus

MILIEU	LIFESTYLE	SOCIAL ATTRIBUTE	ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP	VOTING BEHAVIOR	VALUE ORIENTATION	N
<i>OTAKU</i>	Youth Subculture++ Diet: Mass + Indoor Entertainment + TV: Culture -	Woman: 40.3% Average Age: 33.5 University Graduate: 56.2% Clerical and sales Unmarried: 54.9%		No vote	Nationalism - Authoritarianism - Cultural liberalism + Hedonism + Political inefficacy +	268
<i>IRONIST</i>	TV: Culture - - TV: Entertainment - - Mass entertainment - Acquaintances -	Woman: 41.0% Average Age: 40.1 University Graduate: 68.0% Clerical and sales		No vote	Nationalism - Authoritarianism - Cultural liberalism + Hedonism + Alternative +	100
<i>AVERAGE CITY-DWELLER</i>	TV: Entertainment + Diet: Mass + Cultural entertainment - Diet: High -	Woman: 49.6% Average Age: 40.8 Manual		No vote (local election)	Hedonism + Political inefficacy +	359
<i>MODERN PERFORMER</i>	Indoor Entertainment ++ Diet: High ++ Cultural entertainment + Mass entertainment + Diet: Mass +	Woman: 55.8% Average Age: 41.0 University Graduate: 61.5% Father University Graduate: 45.2% Professionals	Circle for culture		Cultural liberalism + Alternative +	240
<i>YOUNG INNER-CITY DWELLER</i>	Acquaintances ++ TV: Entertainment + Diet: Mass + Mass entertainment +	Woman: 52.6% Average Age: 42.7	Neighborhood association Parents' association	Vote	Hedonism +	114
<i>LIBERAL MIDDLEBROW</i>	Cultural entertainment + TV: Entertainment - Mass entertainment -	Woman: 56.5% Average Age: 49.8 University Graduate: 55.8% Professionals and managers		Vote	Alternative +	354
<i>HIGHBROW</i>	Diet: High +++ Cultural entertainment ++ Indoor Entertainment + Acquaintances + TV: Culture + TV: Entertainment -	Woman: 68.2% Average Age: 52.1 Father University Graduate: 45.8 High income	Circle for culture Circle for conservation of nature or environmental		Cultural liberalism + Anomie - Hedonism - Political inefficacy - Uneasiness of life - Alternative +	132
<i>DULL PERSON</i>	Indoor Entertainment - Diet: Mass - Diet: High - Cultural entertainment - Acquaintances -	Woman: 41.6% Average Age: 56.7 Manual and Unemployed		Vote	Nationalism + Authoritarianism + Cultural liberalism -	411
<i>URBAN VILLAGER</i>	Acquaintances + TV: Culture + Indoor Entertainment - Youth Subculture - Diet: Mass -	Woman: 74.0% Average Age: 57.3	Neighborhood association	Vote	Nationalism + Authoritarianism + Cultural liberalism - Hedonism -	331

Social Milieus in Japan

Table 4 displays a descriptive overview of the characteristics of nine milieus.

● *OTAKU* (*subcultural geeks*): are mainly young middle-class males with a markedly strong hedonistic tendency and a desire to live without working if circumstances allow. They consume modern subcultural media and frequently enjoy fast food. Their sense of political inefficacy is strong and they tend not to vote.

● *IRONISTS*: are mainly young, university-educated, white-collar workers. They tend to be inactive and watch little TV. Although they

are aware of their complicity in environmental destruction and exploitation in developing countries, they are highly hedonistic and their voting turnout is also low.

● *AVERAGE CITY-DWELLERS* : Many of these are corporate clerks or blue-collar workers. Most live with their spouses and unmarried child or children with a decent family income. They are markedly average people who strongly desire an easygoing life. They think emphatically that participation in politics is of no use, and have no other strong characteristics involving awareness.

● *MODERN PERFORMERS* : are typical elites with professional occupations, high incomes, and a relatively high sense of belonging to a class. Status and income, of course, matters for them, but good taste also matters. They tend to be active in leisure, particular about what they eat, and have a high affinity to cultural liberalism.

● *YOUNG INNER-CITY DWELLERS* : These tend to have low educational backgrounds for their young age and be relatively low in class status. However, they tend to have many acquaintances and to be active in community groups and parent-teacher associations. They have rarely been overseas.

● *LIBERAL MIDDLEBROWS* : are relatively elderly with professional or managerial occupations, and in many cases also have spouses with professional occupations. They tend to be avid newspaper readers, although they dislike the Yomiuri and Sankei newspapers.⁸ They tend to be politically anti-conservative and the core of the liberal class in the past.

● *HIGHBROWS* : Many of these are elderly, self-employed, and likely to be female. They put emphasis on personality and good taste, but tend not to be status-centered. They have a wide variety of hobbies and tend to be exceptionally strongly culture- and art-oriented. They have been overseas much more frequently than any of the other groups.

They have a relatively high enrollment in circle activities, environmental organizations, and similar things, a strong sense of class member-

ship, and liberal value orientations.

● *DULL PEOPLE* : are typically elderly, mid-to-lower-level blue-collar workers. They are highly enrolled in community groups, political support organizations, and religious groups, but socialize relatively little with others. They frequently watch sports programs on TV and are avid readers of the *Yomiuri* newspaper. Putting exceptional emphasis on traditional norms and authority, they are typical conservatives.

● *URBAN VILLAGERS* : are typically elderly, mid-to-lower class, and female. Although living in urban areas, many in downtown Tokyo, they strongly retain local or familial networks and put emphasis on traditional norms. They are the least hedonistic milieu.

The characteristics of each milieu substantially reflect the influence of generational and class factors on lifestyle, but these social attributes do not necessarily show a clear match with lifestyle. This study's explicit intention is to supplement the various elements beyond the reach of these social attributes through lifestyle milieus.

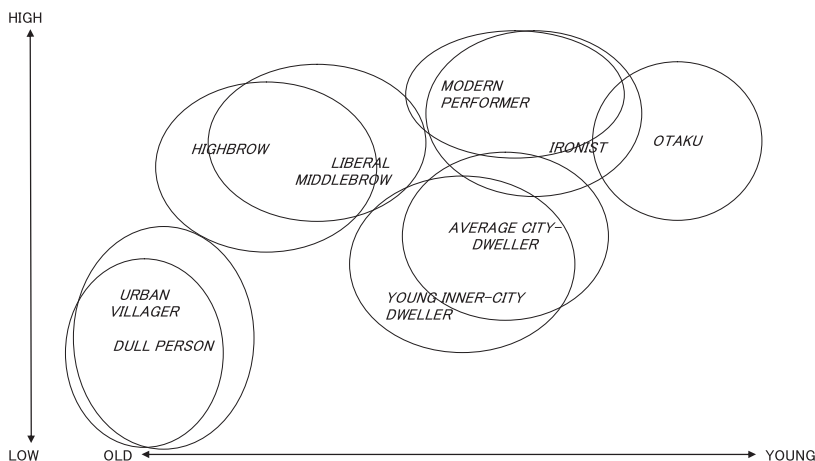


Figure 3 The map of Tokyo milieus

Figure 3 shows the map of Tokyo milieus. Its vertical axis is education and its horizontal axis is generation.

6. Milieus and the Potential Support Base for Green Parties

This section will first reexamine the correspondence between ironists and the green-supporting milieus mentioned in the previous section to find an ideological affinity between the two milieus in their left-libertarian orientations. It will then clarify why ironists fail to be a support base for green parties by focusing on their overall passivity and preference for inaction.

Left-Libertarian Milieus in Tokyo

Previous studies of green politics have pointed out the two characteristics of green parties' supporters of being insufficiently loyal to the parties to provide a solid vote, but being mostly from a specific milieu of young, highly-educated, female, and professional occupations, especially those engaged in human services, affiliated to the public sector, or both. In addition, the green-support milieu is mostly highly left-libertarian.

Among the nine milieus, ironists are the most likely to be university graduates, followed by modern performers. These two milieus are also composed of young people. The modern-performer milieu also has a relatively high rate of professionals, while ironists are overrepresented among public-sector employees. Considering these generational, occupational, and educational factors, modern performers and ironists seem to be the best candidates to be support bases for green parties.

Figure 4 illustrates the value orientations of each milieu, showing the distribution of the factor score. The two axes of the figure correspond to Kitschelt's schema of political space for party competition. The vertical axis refers to attitudes toward cultural liberalism, which means generosity to such

life–political issues as homosexuality and divorce (Giddens 1991, 1992), and the horizontal axis represents nationalism.⁹

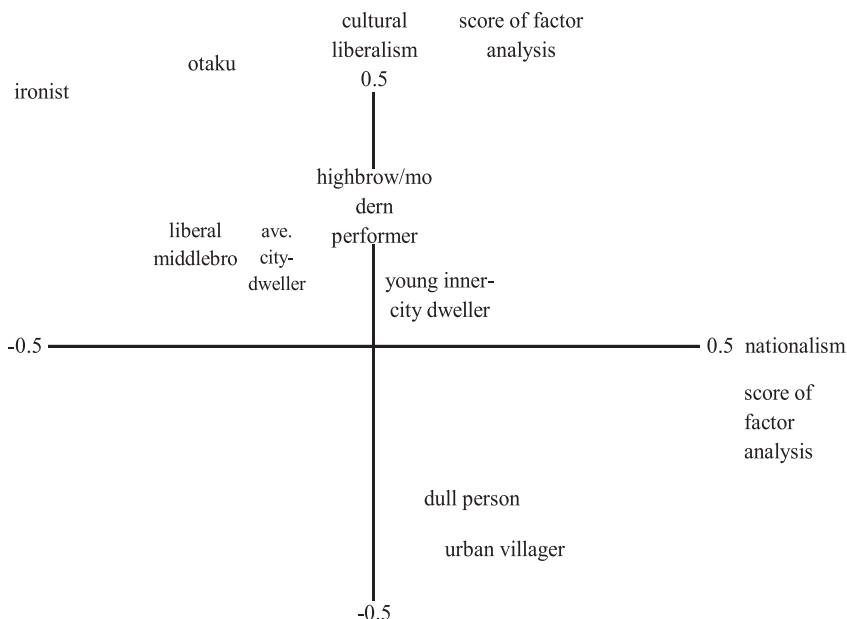


Figure 4 Attitudes to nationalism and cultural liberalism
 $p < .01$

We can see a clear distribution from left–libertarian (culturally libertarian and anti–nationalistic) to right–authoritarian (culturally authoritarian and nationalistic), in accordance with Kitschelt’s (1989, 1994, 1995) theory, so candidates to support green parties in Japan exist at least ideologically. Ironists do show left–libertarian attitudes, but modern performers tend to be less left–libertarian than their backgrounds would suggest. Ironists correspond to the conditions of a green–support milieu in terms of both ideology and attribution, and can potentially be regarded as the primary support base of Japanese green parties.

Political Attitudes and Party Support

Next we can test the ironists' attitudes to actual political issues. In the 2005 Lower House election, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) experienced a historical victory under Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, with most constituencies supporting his policy of privatizing the national post as the symbol of restructuring. He also sealed his position as a nationalist by worshipping at the Yasukuni Shrine, which has been one of the most contentious issues dividing the Japanese right and left. In addition, the increase in LDP seats made it possible to revise the constitution, something that has been a long-cherished wish of LDP politicians but had not been realized for 60 years.

Table 5 shows each milieu's attitude toward these three issues as an indication of their members' likelihood of supporting conservative rule.

Table 5 Attitudes toward key political issues at the time of survey (2005)

	revision of constitution	privatization of national post	Prime Minister's worshipping at Yasukuni shrine
average city-dweller	2.26	1.74	2.55
young inner-city dweller	2.05	1.70	2.51
dull person	2.27	1.97	2.47
liberal middlebrow	2.60	1.88	2.95
ironist	2.31	1.98	2.81
highbrow	2.45	1.80	2.71
Otaku	2.30	1.86	2.50
urban villager	2.33	1.86	2.54
modern performer	2.34	1.84	2.64
total	2.34	1.85	2.62

Note : The value indicates average of response. 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree
 $p < .01$

This shows that we found that liberal middlebrows tended to be the most critical of the nine milieus toward these policies, opposing the revision of the constitution and the Prime Minister's worshipping at Yasukuni Shrine the greatest. They are relatively left-libertarian for their age and have been the core of various social movements since the 1960s (Higuchi et al.2008). Some of them seem still active in various social movements. Although ironists were less critical of the government's policies than the liberal middlebrows, they were the most oppositional of the four milieus composed mainly of younger people, which are the ironists, modern performers, otaku, and young inner-city dwellers.

Another indicator for measuring the nine milieus' political orientations is their members' feelings toward political actors of the left and right. Table 6 indicates the scores of their feelings toward the extreme right and the left. Tokyo's Governor Shintaro Ishihara represents the right, as he could be re-

Table 6 Attitudes to Communist Party and Shintaro Ishihara

	Communist Party	Shintaro Ishihara
average city-dweller	29.5	60.1
young inner-city dweller	24.6	68.2
dull person	28.5	60.4
liberal middlebrow	30.2	52.4
ironist	33.8	47.2
highbrow	28.3	55.2
Otaku	30.2	61.3
urban villager	27.6	61.7
modern performer	29.9	60.1
total	29.2	58.9

Note : The value is based on a feeling thermometer scaled from 0 to 100
 $p < .01$

garded as Japan's most famous radical right-wing politician. Despite his far-right speeches and policies, he is one of Japan's most popular politicians. The Japan Communist Party was our left-wing indicator. The tendency we found is clear, with ironists being the most critical of Ishihara and the most approving of the Communist Party.¹⁰ This is consistent with their left-libertarian orientations and a further indication of them being a potential support base for green parties.

Table 7, however, shows the distribution of party affiliation to be slightly ambiguous. Milieus with the higher proportions of young people had more independents, while those with more elderly people tended toward higher levels of party affiliation. Though dull people had the highest rate of affiliation with the LDP, the LDP was also the party with the highest rate of affiliation from all milieus, with the dull people, who were the highest at 42.8%, having less than twice as many LDP affiliates than the ironists, who were the

Table 7 Milieus and party affiliation

	LDP	Demo- critic	Komei	SDP/ JCP	Independ- ents	N
Otaku	23.4	13.2	2.6	3.4	<u>57.4</u>	265
ironist	23.0	15.0	7.0	6.0	<u>49.0</u>	100
average city-dweller	30.5	17.1	4.5	3.4	<u>44.5</u>	357
modern performer	29.4	19.7	1.3	2.9	<u>46.6</u>	238
young inner-city dweller	34.2	9.6	<u>14.9</u>	2.6	38.6	114
liberal middlebrow	29.3	20.5	2.8	<u>9.1</u>	38.2	351
Highbrow	33.6	<u>25.8</u>	2.3	7.8	30.5	128
dull person	<u>42.8</u>	18.6	3.2	<u>8.7</u>	26.7	404
urban villager	<u>44.2</u>	21.2	<u>7.2</u>	5.6	21.8	321
Total	33.5	18.3	4.3	5.8	38.0	2278

Note: χ^2 square test was significant at 1%. Cells are underlined when standardized residual is 2.0 or more.

lowest at 23%. Other parties are more dependent on specific milieus. The Komei Party in particular could be considered a milieu party, as it relies heavily on young inner-city dwellers and urban villagers.

Ironists have the second-highest proportion of independent voters, which is a favorable factor in their potential to support green parties, as dealignment is a necessary precondition for supporting new political parties. However, considering the features of ironists, this dealignment may not lead to realignment. They are less left-oriented than expected and, as mentioned earlier, are more likely to abstain from voting than other milieus. They seem to be indifferent to politics rather than critical of existing parties.

Shut-In Left-Libertarians : Distance Between Critical Consciousness and Activism

This study's findings indicate that ironists are the most likely milieu to support green parties. However, we have chosen the term *ironist* instead of *alternative*, as the German studies have, because of Japanese left libertarians'

Table 8 Group participation (%)

	hobby circles	environmental groups	consumer groups
average city-dweller	28.8	0.6	24.2
young inner-city dweller	52.6	6.1	35.1
dull person	27.1	2.4	19.5
liberal middlebrow	49.1	6.8	25.1
ironist	32.0	3.0	23.0
highbrow	65.2	12.9	28.8
otaku	31.7	4.1	23.9
urban villager	52.1	9.7	28.8
modern performer	56.3	8.3	27.5

p<.01

unique feature of passivity, which is their most salient difference from the German alternative milieu.

We have found that ironists tend to be introverted people with a poor repertoire of leisure activities and a weak commitment to them. Table 8 shows the milieus' participation rates in hobby circles, environmental groups, and consumer groups, groups that may be considered to be pertinent to green parties. Highbrows, modern performers, and urban villagers are the most actively involved in them, but ironists, along with otaku, are among the milieus least likely to include members of these groups.¹¹

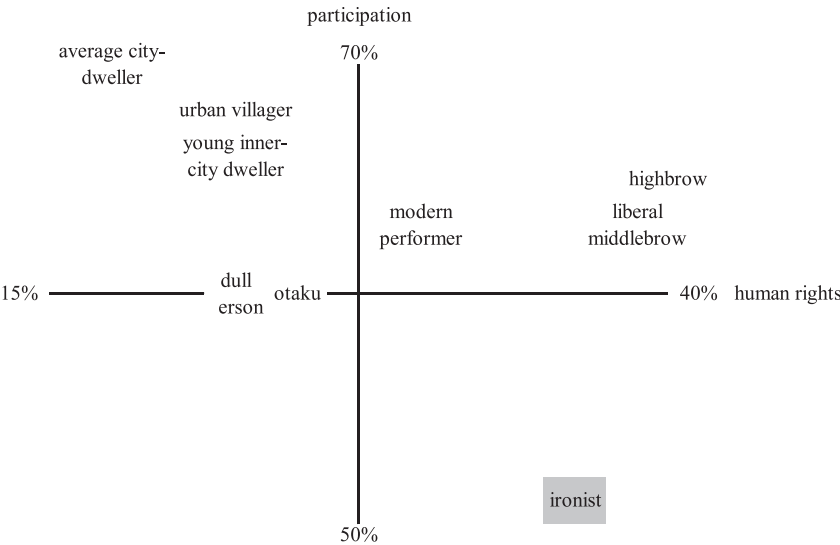


Figure 5 Preference for participation and human rights

Note: $p < .01$. The vertical axis is the proportion of those who prioritize participation and the horizontal axis of those who prioritize human rights

Such passivity also influences their political preferences. Figure 5 illustrates the value preferences of each milieu using Inglehart's (1977, 1990) post-materialism index, indicating the proportion of each milieu's respondents

whose responses indicated a preference for “giving people more say in important government decisions” and for “protecting freedom of speech” over “maintaining a high level of economic growth” and “Maintaining order in the nation”. The respondents overall tended to prefer participation in politics more than human rights and freedom. Typical post-materialists would be positioned on the upper right side of the figure, as is the case with the high-brow and liberal middlebrow milieus.

However, while ironists tend to report a preference for freedom and human rights, they also tend to be exceptionally negative about political participation. This means that although ironists may be left-libertarian, their introverted disinclination to take political action to further such preferences makes them highly unlikely to form any significant political force.

7. Conclusion

This paper has found that such factors as the electoral system, the nature of party competition, and post-materialism fail to answer the question of why there has been no significant green party in Japan. Japanese conditions in regard to these factors have been relatively favorable, or at least not disadvantageous, to the rise of green parties in comparison with other countries that do have significant green parties. We have therefore addressed the question by focusing on the characteristics of specific milieus that seemed to have the potential to provide the basis of support for Japanese green parties, and our primary research did find a candidate milieu for this.

However, we also found that the Japanese milieu with the most salient left-libertarian orientation, whom we term ironists, were, unlike their German counterparts, unlikely to be the green milieu due to their passive lifestyles and preferences. They tend to be sensitive to the freedom of themselves and others, with generous attitudes toward deviance and heterogeneity, and to be

strongly negative toward nationalism and radical-right politicians who would curtail their freedom. However, they are also cynical about *any* kind of activism that may reduce their individual freedom, even though it may be compatible with their value preferences.

This might be one of the factors that enable such radical-right politicians as Shintaro Ishihara to get away with such discriminatory practices as hate speeches. Of course, nativist movements are also common in many European countries, where radical right-wing parties have outpolled green parties in elections, but tens of thousands of people mobilized against such movements there. In Japan, the virtual lack of counter-mobilization against xenophobia and racism has allowed radical right-wing politicians and nativist movements to have their own way. Ironists may hate them, but they fail to act against them.

Finally, it is significant to study green parties beyond the Western context because doing so is likely to indicate some answers to several questions about the emergence of green parties. Some of these are : a) Are green parties the product of the Western political culture? b) If not, do industrialization and environmental pollution inevitably lead to the establishment of green parties? c) Can green parties be characterized by their unique political cultures globally? and d) If this is the case, are we witnessing the emergence of new anti-authoritarian political culture across the world?

This paper has focused on Japan as a negative case in regard to the emergence of green parties. Japan had one of the worst experiences of environmental pollution in the world in the late 1960s through the 1970s. Though such pollution has been reduced since the 1980s, many conflicts over various environmental issues remain, but green political challenges have failed to win voter support.

As this study's post-materialist scores show, Japan is not a relatively materialist society. Although the conservative LDP was in power for an ex-

ceptionally long period of 38 years from 1955 to 1993, the established socialist and communist parties did win a considerable number of votes. Independent voters have also increased to nearly half of the electorate, indicating a considerable degree of dealignment. Moreover, our analysis found a milieu similar to green-supporting milieus in Germany.

However, Japan has failed to produce even a small-but-stable green party. The only difference has been the passivity of the milieu with the values to form the basis of support for an enduring green party. Future research needs to clarify whether such a phenomenon is unique to Japan.

Notes

- ¹ One noticeable exception is the Network Movement, which is based on the Seikatsu Club consumers' co-operative. It has been winning seats in local assemblies in such big urban areas as Tokyo and Kanagawa. Lam (1999) described the Network Movement as a quasi-green party, as some of the criteria for green parties do not apply to it. In addition, the Network Movement has never stood for national elections, limiting itself to cooperation with the Democratic Party.
- ² Right-libertarians in this context are regarded as the agents for 'new political culture' (Clark and Inglehart 1998).
- ³ The word milieu, which means social environment and living conditions surrounding individuals, was originally introduced to German from French in the nineteenth century (Dudenredaktion 2001).
- ⁴ Mochmann (2002) is the primary reference for the milieu-extraction analysis method.
- ⁵ ALLBUS has been conducted every other year since 1980. We have referred to the "Nationwide Survey on the Information Society (JIS 2001)", which was conducted on the assumption of a comparison with the 1998 ALLBUS study (Naoi et al. 2003), rather than on the original German survey in preparing the Tokyo survey.
- ⁶ We calculated the means of the variables used in cluster analysis for each milieu. As all the variables are standardized, we regarded those with values 0.5

Explaining Japan's Lack of Green Parties : A Social-Milieu Approach

above or -0.5 below as characteristics of each milieu.

⁷ Table shows the results of our factor analysis of social attitudes.

Table : Factor Analysis of Social Attitudes

Q9 / Q7	Nationalis m	Authoritari anism	Security	Cultural Liberalism	Economic Liberalism	Q10	Anomie	Hedonism	Political Inefficacy	Mysticism	Uneasiness of Life	Alternative
Q9_14	0.75	-0.02	0.00	0.04	-0.03	Q10_6	0.68	-0.03	-0.02	-0.05	0.02	-0.02
Q9_17	0.71	-0.03	0.08	0.01	-0.02	Q10_5	0.68	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.13
Q9_15	0.65	0.14	-0.03	-0.04	0.06	Q10_4	0.64	-0.02	0.06	-0.05	-0.05	0.01
Q9_16	0.57	-0.02	-0.08	-0.08	-0.01	Q10_3	0.63	0.02	-0.07	0.05	-0.04	-0.03
Q9_3	-0.06	0.76	-0.06	0.00	0.04	Q10_1	-0.02	0.83	0.03	-0.05	0.00	0.05
Q9_2	0.00	0.39	0.03	-0.07	0.02	Q10_2	0.02	0.79	-0.04	0.05	-0.04	0.00
Q9_4	0.02	0.52	0.09	0.07	-0.02	Q10_8	-0.06	0.00	0.91	-0.08	-0.03	0.22
Q9_1	0.10	0.51	-0.02	0.06	-0.10	Q10_10	0.02	-0.04	0.56	0.04	0.05	-0.19
Q9_6	0.04	-0.03	0.74	-0.03	0.05	Q10_7	0.24	0.03	0.35	0.01	0.00	-0.07
Q9_7	-0.04	0.01	0.66	0.03	-0.03	Q10_15	-0.04	-0.04	0.01	0.65	-0.01	0.15
Q9_8	-0.07	0.03	0.52	0.03	-0.10	Q10_16	-0.02	0.08	-0.08	0.46	0.06	0.04
Q9_9	0.05	0.04	0.39	-0.07	0.07	Q10_13	0.05	-0.14	0.02	0.26	-0.10	0.18
Q9_12	0.05	0.00	-0.02	0.74	-0.02	Q10_11	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.00	-0.59	0.08
Q9_11	-0.03	0.05	0.00	0.61	0.06	Q10_12	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.57	0.13
Q9_13	-0.09	-0.01	0.01	0.55	0.01	Q10_9	0.04	0.05	0.22	0.09	-0.01	-0.59
Q7_1	0.02	-0.02	0.05	0.02	0.75	Q10_14	0.09	0.03	0.16	0.08	0.04	0.29
Q7_2	0.08	-0.07	-0.05	0.10	0.49	Q10_17	0.00	0.05	0.03	0.18	0.00	0.40
Q7_5	0.15	-0.06	0.04	0.09	-0.42	Loading Square						
Loading Square							2.53	1.52	2.24	1.05	1.14	1.08

⁸ *Yomiuri* is the most widely circulated newspaper in Japan and the world. In contrast to *Asahi Shimbun*, its political stance is conservative, and lower-class people tend to prefer it. *Sankei* is less widely read and more conservative than *Yomiuri*.

⁹ In terms of the horizontal axis between socialist and capitalist politics, Kitschelt (1994, 1995) seemed to maintain that economic issues were the main sources of political conflict. However, he also used the more comprehensive terms of left and right to describe the new politics of radical rights and greens. This paper uses nationalism as its indicator of left-right cleavage because nationalism rather than economic policy has been the main issue dividing Japan's left and right (Otake 1996).

¹⁰ In contrast, young inner-city dwellers are at the opposite pole, being the most approving of Ishihara and the most strongly opposed to the Communist Party. They therefore seem to be a potential support base for radical right parties.

¹¹ This is also true for the participation in other associations such as neighborhood associations, labor unions, parent-teacher associations and religious groups.

Appendix : Comparison between Japanese and German Milieus

The following figure shows the corresponding relationship between Tokyo milieus and Germany's SINUS milieus. They cannot be compared exactly, as

the two survey questionnaires differed greatly, but this may nevertheless provide some insights for future comparative studies.

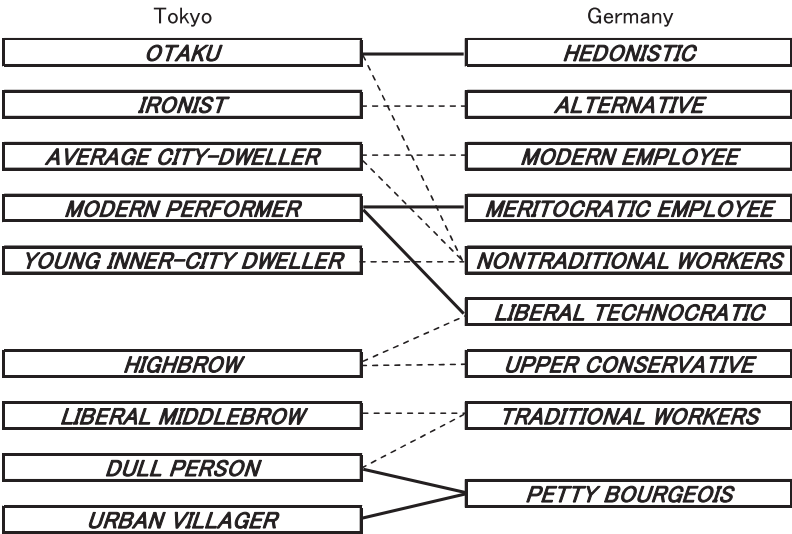


Figure Comparisons Between Tokyo milieus and SINUS milieus

Note : Bold lines suggest a strong relationship and dotted lines indicate a weak relationship, based on the authors' subjective judgment.

Although these are subjective observations, some commonalities can be found between Germany and Tokyo, as a proxy for Japan. The otaku milieu is similar to the hedonistic milieu in Germany, and the modern performer milieu is similar to Germany's meritocratic employee and liberal technocratic milieus in terms of mentality. Among the elderly, the urban villager milieu and the dull people milieu seem to correspond to some degree with the petty bourgeois milieu.

We did, however, find some interesting differences. The ironist milieu is mainly composed of highly educated white-collar workers with a strong sense of anti-authoritarianism and anti-nationalism, similar to the alternative milieu in Germany, but is strongly introverted and less active than its German coun-

terparts.

Neither the nontraditional workers milieu nor the modern employee milieu corresponded clearly with any German milieu. We classified both the average city-dweller milieu and the young inner-city dweller milieu by their degree of relationship with their local communities.

Neither the traditional workers milieu nor the upper conservative milieu corresponded clearly with any Tokyo milieu, either. The traditional workers milieu is somewhat close to the liberal middlebrow milieu and the dull people milieu, which our study differentiated on the basis of age and whether their members have hobbies, with the liberal middlebrow milieu's members being relatively inactive in their leisure pursuits on the whole.

The upper conservative milieu is relatively close to the highbrow milieu, but although the highbrow milieu is composed mainly of elderly people, their political awareness is relatively liberal. This indicates that in Japan, being in the upper class is not necessarily an indication of being conservative.

The question remains of whether it is valid to regard these variances in milieu as being characteristic of Japan, and this paper cannot answer that question fully. Since the findings reflect differences in item setting and study design, wider studies may extract clearer milieus with a stronger correspondence to those elsewhere.

This is where the difficulty in milieu analysis lies. The selection of the items and the number of clusters are essentially arbitrary. This limitation, however, could be overcome through the replication of similar studies. A myriad of milieu surveys have studied German milieus. The general milieu structure has a high level of commonality, even if the items used vary from study to study, so the more milieu surveys researchers conduct in Japan, the more likely it is that a more precise Japanese model will emerge.

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